

NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART

NEWS RELEASE

FOURTH STREET AT CONSTITUTION AVENUE NW WASHINGTON DC 20565 • 737-4215/842-6353

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**PRESS PREVIEW:
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 3
10 A.M. to 3 P.M.

DAVID SMITH OPENS AT
NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART ON NOVEMBER 7, 1982

WASHINGTON, D.C. September 17, 1982. An exhibition of over 60 large works by David Smith, one of the most important and prolific American sculptors of this century, opens November 7, 1982 in the East Building of the National Gallery of Art. Works from seven major series present different aspects of Smith's art from 1951 until his death in 1965, and are drawn from private collections and from American and European museums. The exhibition closes on April 24, 1983. It is made possible by a grant from the American Medical Association.

The seven series of sculptures show the richness and diversity of the formal and thematic concerns Smith undertook in his welded metal sculpture. The Agricolas, begun in 1951, are all made using abandoned farm machinery, while the Sentinels are tall, vertical sentry figures. Both the Circles and the Zigs show Smith's use of brilliant color during the early 1960s, whereas the Wagons are a decade-long preoccupation with sculpture set on wheels. The Voltri Boltons are unpainted works made of steel from Voltri,

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Italy, where Smith had worked making sculpture for the Spoleto Festival. His last series, the Cubis, are monumental constructions of stainless steel cubes, cylinders, and disks.

Born in Decatur, Indiana in 1906, Smith learned the art of welding while employed in an automobile factory. When he moved to New York in 1928 he wanted to be a painter, but changed to welded sculpture in 1933 when he saw works in this technique made by Picasso and Julio Gonzalez, who had pioneered welded metal sculpture only five years earlier.

During the 1930s, Smith made his sculpture at the Terminal Iron Works, a metal shop in New York. In the 1940s he moved to Bolton Landing on Lake George in upstate New York and created a studio complex there on the grounds of a former fox farm. Smith rechristened the farm Terminal Iron Works after his previous New York shop. All of the sculpture in the David Smith exhibition was made at Bolton Landing.

Smith was a prolific artist during his mature years. Between 1951 and his death in 1965, he made over 400 works of sculpture, nearly half of these in the last five years of his life. Moreover, as his career developed Smith's sculpture grew larger in scale, culminating in the almost architectural Cubi "Gates," which conclude the exhibition.

The artist stored much of this work in two open fields which surrounded his house and studio, creating one of the landmark experiences in modern art. The installation of David Smith seeks to evoke the experience of Bolton Landing

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by bringing together seven different series which show the breadth of Smith's work, and by installing them on different levels of the open courtyard spaces of the East Building. One exception to this will be the Voltri Bolton works, which will be placed in the "arena" gallery on the upper level, which was designed for their companion series, the Voltris, shown at the opening of the East Building.

The exhibition has been organized by E. A. Carmean, Jr., curator, twentieth-century art, National Gallery. Mr. Carmean has also written the exhibition catalogue which discusses each of the series as well as Smith's career and his working methods.

The installation of the exhibition was designed by Gaillard Ravenel and Mark Leithauser of the Gallery's Design and Installation Department and E. A. Carmean, Jr.

An exhibition, David Smith: Painter, Sculptor, Draftsman, opens at the Smithsonian's Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden on November 4, 1982. Although Smith is known chiefly as a sculptor, this exhibition shows Smith as an accomplished artist in several media. A press preview of the exhibition will be held November 3, 1982 from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Concurrently, the Hirshhorn will present From the Life of the Artist: A Documentary View of David Smith from November 4, 1982 until January 2, 1983.

END

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION or photographs contact Katherine Warwick, Assistant to the Director (Information Officer), or Carolyn Engel, Information Office, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. 20565, (202) 842-6353.